



The Way

October 2014

NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF H O M E S T E A D , F L

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus summarized the believer's role in society. He said, "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled on by men. You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lamp stand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." I don't know about you, but as I read these words, two main concepts come to mind: INFLUENCE and EXPOSURE. Just as salt influences the flavor of the food it seasons, so we are to influence our culture for righteousness. Just as light exposes what darkness conceals, so we are to expose evil and error by the holy lives we live and the prophetic words we say. In a sense, the church is called to be society's conscience.

Sometimes that means speaking out on issues it would be easy to ignore. Many churches would rather not "rock the boat." Some pastors refuse to bring up any issue (in any venue) that might offend some. But if the church, which has the Word of God, is silent, how can society be expected to navigate the moral issues of our day? While we may run the risk of offending some by our counsel, we run the greater and more deadly risk of failing the masses by our silence. Simply put, when Scripture speaks, we must speak, even if there are political ramifications.

Normally, I am the first to point out that the solution to our nation's problems is not political or legislative, but spiritual. America needs a spiritual awakening. This does not mean, however, that there are never times when we should speak about political or legislative issues. We are facing an important issue right now in the state of Florida. Many of you may not even be aware of it. I am referring to the Amendment 2 initiative to legalize medical marijuana. Maybe you have seen the ads promoting this measure. Usually, there is a picture of

someone suffering from a debilitating disease. Their emaciated frame makes clear that they are in pain. The caption reads, "What if this were someone you love?" Obviously, if your spouse, parent or child were to suffer from a terminal illness, you would want to ease that pain in any way you could, right?

If all you have seen are the ads, you don't have the whole story. In my opinion, Amendment 2 is a trojan horse measure to make it easier for recreational users of marijuana. As the old saying goes, "The Devil is in the details." Let me point out to you a few of the details regarding this amendment so you can see it for what it is.

If Amendment 2 were to pass, a person would be able to obtain a written statement from a physician indicating that they have a "debilitating medical condition" or "other conditions." "Other conditions" can mean anyone who decides they have any kind of pain that would be eased by marijuana and can persuade a doctor to agree. Thus, marijuana becomes legal for those who claim to have trouble sleeping. Women could

obtain it for menstrual cramps. I think it's safe to say anyone who wants to use marijuana recreationally will find some part of their body that "hurts" and find at least one doctor out there to sign off on it.

If Amendment 2 were to pass, once a person has obtained written consent from a physician, the marijuana would be dispensed by a "personal caregiver." A "personal caregiver" is defined as "anyone over twenty-one (21) years old." Amendment 2 does nothing to stop a felon or drug dealer from being that dispenser. It would be easier to get a caregiver's license than a driver's license.

Amendment 2 also includes what critics call a "teenage loophole." In other words, there is no age restriction placed upon who can obtain marijuana for medical purposes. Parents are cut out from the process. Teens will be able to go to any "Medical Marijuana Treatment Center" to obtain marijuana. There are no restrictions on where these pot shops may appear. There is nothing to keep one from sprouting up right next to your child's school. And Amendment 2 goes out of its way to specify that this marijuana WILL be permitted as "food, tinctures, aerosols, oils and ointments." However you want it, you can get it. This sounds a lot more like a marijuana store than a "treatment center."

Some may say, "Pastor, if you don't want to use marijuana, you don't have to. Why do you care what other people do?" I would say we ARE to care about what is in the best interests of society in general and children, in particular.

For example, consider some of the arguments made against Amendment 2 by the Florida Sheriff's Association (FSA). They claim, "The younger an individual is when first using marijuana, the more likely they are to end up using cocaine and heroin." Those who spend the most time policing and enforcing drug laws tells us marijuana is a gateway drug to others even more deadly. They also state, "Marijuana potency is much stronger than years ago. Potency has tripled in the past 20 years." So, you did marijuana back in the day? You think if you turned out fine, no one else will be hurt? Think again.

This next statistic is perhaps the most troubling: "Twenty-five percent of all fatal vehicle accidents in the U.S. involve marijuana." Lose someone in a fatal car accident? Florida Sheriffs say there is a one in four chance that marijuana played a role. Frankly, that's a lot of funerals. As Christians, are we supposed to ignore something that is so devastating to so many? Should we not care?

I share these statements from the FSA because, by the grace of God, I have never consumed marijuana. I personally know individuals who think that makes me unqualified to have a say on this issue. I would argue that Florida Sheriffs know more about the dangers of cannabis than the guy in the cheap seats of a Grateful Dead concert.

Still, there are other objections some may offer. "Should we be incarcerating so many of our citizens for the use of marijuana?" That is a separate issue altogether. How one enforces laws

against marijuana is not the same as deciding whether to make certain drugs legal. Others will complain, "Isn't alcohol abuse a much more serious problem?" Alcohol abuse, including rampant DUI's, is a serious issue. And yet again, one does not have to pick and choose on this issue. You can be against the legalization of marijuana and for tougher laws on drunk driving. You can be against Amendment 2 and believe in restrictions on how alcohol is advertised.

This amendment is not, as proponents claim, about helping terminal patients in their last days. That's why this amendment is rejected by the American Medical Association, American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute. If true medical use were the goal, there would be no need for this amendment. This summer, Gov. Rick Scott signed the "Compassionate Medical Cannabis Act of 2014." This measure allows "low-tetrahydrocannabinol cannabis" to be used for medical patients suffering from cancer. It also makes provision for those with "a physical medical condition that chronically produces symptoms of seizures." Included is epilepsy, as well as those with "severe and persistent muscle spasms." So what is the difference between the law Gov. Scott just signed and Amendment 2, you ask? The main difference is that the new law already in effect can only be prescribed where "no other satisfactory alternative treatment options exist for that patient." In other words, you can't make up any kind of pain and get marijuana as a result. The fact that proponents of Amendment 2 were not satisfied with this bill tells you

their real motivations lie elsewhere. It is not the welfare of the suffering they seek to alleviate. It's the barriers to de facto legalization of marijuana they seek to remove.

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2013), states that have legalized medical marijuana have about double the use of recreational marijuana use as states that do not. In other words, if the numbers are telling the truth, a vote to affirm Amendment 2 will yield double the number of marijuana consumers, double the number of

people being ushered into other drugs like cocaine and heroin, double the number of high drivers and double the harmful effects across the board. Again, are Christians supposed to favor this? I think not.

As Christians, we have a duty to be salt and light. Yes, that includes proclaiming the gospel and preaching the Bible, but it does not end there. When a grave danger threatens our land, we are to speak up and we are to vote. I hope you will make sure to vote NO on Amendment 2 on November 4, or whenever you

cast your ballot.

I am also including a copy of the resolution passed by the State Board of Missions of the Florida Baptist Convention, of which I am a member.

Thank you for the privilege of being your pastor.

Pastor Howard



RESOLUTION TO OPPOSE THE LEGALIZATION OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA

WHEREAS, the November 4, 2014, General Election ballot will contain Amendment 2 – the so-called Florida Right to Medical Marijuana; and

WHEREAS, the ballot initiative seeks to permit persons with nine specific medical conditions to have unlimited access to medical marijuana; and

WHEREAS, the Amendment also provides that medical marijuana can be dispensed without a physician's prescription for broad but undefined "other conditions" which can include anything from back pain to trouble sleeping; and

WHEREAS, so-called caregivers will be legally permitted to dispense the drug to up to five persons without legal regulation; and a caregiver can be anyone from a felon to a drug dealer; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Missions has individual and corporate empathy for those Floridians suffering from debilitating diseases, but the Board does not believe legalizing an addictive drug without strong regulatory oversight is an appropriate solution; and

WHEREAS, the effort to legalize marijuana is contrary to the interests of the public health, safety and welfare, and will adversely affect the rights of citizens to live and work in a community where drug abuse is not accepted and citizens are not subjected to the adverse effects of the drug abuse; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the State Board of Missions of the Florida Baptist State Convention, go on record to oppose Amendment 2 that will appear on the November 4, 2014, General Election ballot; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board call upon Florida Baptist pastors to diligently encourage their church members to promote and vote to defeat Amendment 2; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Board request the Executive Director-Treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention, to take all reasonable actions to notify and create awareness among Florida Baptists on the importance of voting against Amendment 2.

Happy Birthday!

10/01 - Vivianna Catlin	10/07 - Rebeca Santana	10/16 - B.J. Benn	10/21 - Catherine Botek
10/01 - Steve Clayton	10/08 - Brian Pulak	10/17 - Steve Bergeson	10/23 - Alex Taylor
10/02 - Cristal Cruz	10/08 - Suzanne Suarez	10/17 - Jessie Delgado	10/24 - June Thomas
10/02 - Vivian Nelson	10/09 - Tairo Sosa	10/17 - Andres Diaz	10/26 - Jason Eldridge
10/02 - Estefania Sarraff	10/10 - Kailee Breivogel	10/17 - Chris Matthews	10/27 - David Allen
10/03 - Austin Pichardo	10/10 - Chuy De La Cruz	10/17 - Sarah Moak	10/27 - Kaitlyn Breivogel
10/03 - Sabrina Pichardo	10/10 - Anaya Goedhart	10/19 - David Accursio	10/28 - Irasol Cruz
10/04 - Jonathan Davis	10/10 - Tania Morales	10/19 - Pamela Helms	10/28 - Veronica Dominquez
10/04 - Nicole Hardiman	10/11 - Ralph Bellis	10/19 - Zonnia Villena	10/28 - Ashton Drury
10/05 - Blair Lowe	10/12 - Ala Lugo	10/20 - Randy House	10/28 - Madison McCarty
10/06 - Pat Hollinger	10/12 - Trent Martino	10/20 - Lizzie Losner	10/28 - Judy Mendheim
10/06 - Huguette Lundy	10/12 - Donna Case	10/20 - Steven Losner	10/29 - Sasha Zamora
10/06 - Kollins Lundy	10/13 - Rachel Goodwin	10/20 - Donald Mills	10/20 - Corey Gilbert
10/06 - Tracy Wilt	10/14 - Yvette Cordova	10/20 - Smithy Smith	10/31 - Lani Hardiman
10/07 - Caleb Benn	10/14 - Emily Friman	10/20 - Crystyna Wright	
10/07 - Lindsay Fox	10/15 - Amanda Barnes	10/21 - Tim Ebersole	
10/07 - Edith Ramos	10/16 - Tiffany Seneriz	10/21 - Melissa Jabat	



Music Ministry



Sunday evening, November 2, our sanctuary choir will be leading a “Gaither style” Everybody Sing. This will be an enjoyable evening of worship and fellowship. Make sure you mark your calendar and don’t miss out on the excitement; a worshipful, enjoyable, dreamful with an earful evening.

Our sanctuary choir is busy working on

Christmas, “Unspeakable Joy” is the title of our Christmas cantata. This is to be presented Friday, December 5th, and Sunday, December 7th. Two spectacular evenings to invite friends and families to hear the Christmas story through song. As usual, your invitation from me stand open for those who would like to join us. We practice on Sunday evenings following the service.

Thank you Cooper McMillan, Eric Bryant, and the men who are on building and grounds! The lights in the sanctuary are tremendous and bright. This was well needed and over due. Thanks men!!

Singing for HIM,
Pam



Stewardship September 2014

Contributions for September 2014:	\$ 41,002.38
Monthly budget requirements:	\$ 46,227.68
YTD Contributions:	\$ 588,825.48
YTD Budget:	\$ 600,959.84

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

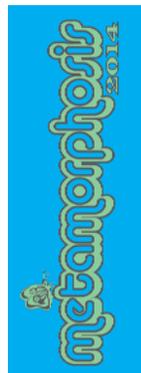
2014 Maguire State Mission Offering



God's Compassionate People

Goal: \$3,500.00

Received: \$2,171.91



Word of Life Youth Camp

October 23 -26, 2014

Deadline to register

10/8/14 \$150.00

If you are able to sponsor a student, please contact Joe.

CHAPMAN PARTNERSHIP FOR THE HOMELESS

28205 SW 124th Ave



Tuesday,
October 21,
11:30-1:00 p.m.

First Things First Men's Prayer Breakfast

All men are invited to join us Saturday,
October 4, at 8:00 a.m.

Thanksgiving

Food Drive



Help us provide a thanksgiving feast to families in need.

Items needed: Stuffing mix, cranberry sauce, instant mashed potatoes, corn, chicken broth, canned sweet potatoes, green beans, rice, pumpkin pie filling, pie crust (boxed), dry beans, evaporated milk, cream of mushroom soup, flour and oil.

"Gift cards and monetary gifts are appreciated and needed to purchase turkeys and perishable items." Deadline November 19th



Join us Saturday, October 4, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall as we enjoy the food and fellowship. Help the Women on Mission kick-off our Thanksgiving canned food drive.

Prison Ministry

"I was in prison and you came to visit me." Matthew 25:36

If you want to volunteer in our Prison Ministry, training will be by appointment. Please contact the church office (305) 247-1662.

ONLINE:
WWW.FBCHOMESTEAD.ORG

NEWSLETTER OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH OF
HOMESTEAD, FL

PO Box 900428
29050 SW 177 Ave
Homestead, FL 33090
Office: (305) 247-1662
Fax: (305) 247-0117
E-mail: fbchoffice@bellsouth.net
Web: www.fbchomestead.org



**Building bridges...empowering
people...changing lives!**



Here's a look at what's going on in our Student Ministry this month.

At ENCOUNTER we're kicking off a new sermon series called **A Season in the Minors**. We'll spend the next several weeks examining selected Scriptures from the Minor Prophets. If your student hasn't gotten plugged into ENCOUNTER, this would be a **great** time to encourage them to come worship with us!

On Saturday, October 11, we're heading to the Kendall Ice Arena to play Broomball. The cost for the event is \$15 and the money must be turned in by Sunday, October 5. Students can sign up on the sign-up sheet in the Student Ministry room and can turn their money in to the church office.

October also means it's time for our Student Ministry's annual fall retreat, **Metamorphosis**. This year's retreat takes place from October 23-26. Cost for the retreat is \$150 and the deadline to sign up is Wednesday, October 8. Permission forms can be found in the Student Ministry room or on the Upcoming Events tab of our website (www.633students.org). We have several students in need of financial assistance so if you are able to contribute any amount toward making that possible, please let me know.

I also want to remind all of our students and parents that the deadline for initial deposits for next summer's mission trips is right around the corner! Sunday, November 2, is the deadline to register and submit the deposit for either the Pompano Beach mission trip or our international trip to Belize.

The core value I'd like to remind you of this month is the core value of **Worldwide Evangelism**. This core value highlights the truth that God has commanded us to take the gospel to our community, the ends of the earth, and everywhere in between. We want our students to understand that they are **always** on mission—no matter where they are or what they are doing! We want to do everything we possibly can to equip them to live out that mission of making disciples of **all** peoples!

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you and to serve with you for the glory of God!

For His Glory,

Joe

